

Message Text

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SUBJ: CONVERSATION BETWEEN SENATOR SAM NUNN AND PRESIDENT PARK

SUMMARY. SENATOR NUNN, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR, MET FOR
OVER AN HOUR WITH PRESIDENT PARK JANUARY 17. AFTER BRIEF
DISCUSSION OF ENERGY CRISIS, PRESIDENT PARK
MADE VEHEMENT DEFENSE OF HIS INTERNAL POLICIES IN LENGTHY
AND MORE DETAILED FASHION THAN IS CUSTOMARY. DEFENSE
LARGELY ALONG FAMILIAR LINES. END SUMMARY

1. DURING INITIAL PHASE OF DISCUSSION, BOTH PRESIDENT
PARK AND SENATOR NUNN COMMENTED ON EXTREMELY DIFFICULT
PROBLEMS ARISING FROM ENERGY CRISIS WITH NUNN SUPPORTING
RECENT STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER
REGARDING POSSIBLE ACTIONS IN CASE OF STRANGULATION OF THE
WEST. PRESIDENT PARK SAID THAT ROK UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM
ARABS WHO THREATEN TO CUT OFF OIL SUPPLY AND NOT SUPPORT ROK
UN POSITION, IF IT ACCREDITS AMBASSADOR RESIDENT ELSEWHERE TO
ISRAEL. ISRAEL ALSO PUTTING HEAVY PRESSURE ON ROK AND ROK
FACES DILEMMA.

2. SENATOR NUNN THEN TURNED TO SUBJECT OF CONGRESSIONAL
PRESSURES ON DEFENSE BUDGET AND SENSITIVITY IN CONGRESS TO
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HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. HE URGED HELPFUL ACTIONS TO ASSIST CONGRESS-

MEN SUCH AS HIMSELF WHO SUPPORT CONTINUED SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH KOREA, POINTING TO INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KOREAN DOMESTIC POLITICS AND CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE.

3. PRESIDENT PARK RESPONDED THAT HE IS VERY WELL AWARE OF CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURES AND UNDERSTANDS IMPACT OF ALLEGATIONS THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT SUFFICIENTLY DEMONSTRATE DEMOCRACY. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT KOREANS DO NOT ENJOY AS MUCH DEMOCRACY AS AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THAT KOREAN CONSTITUTION HAS FEATURES DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION.

4. PRESIDENT PARK THEN ASKED RHETORICAL QUESTION WHETHER AMERICAN PEOPLE WOULD ENJOY SAME KIND OF POLITICAL FREEDOM AS IT DOES TODAY IF THE UNITED STATES WERE DIVIDED, WITH ONE PART COMMUNIST SUPPORTED BY ALLIES IN CANADA AND MEXICO WHO WERE VERY STRONG. PRESIDENT RETURNED SEVERAL TIMES TO THIS ANALOGY, POINTING OUT THAT DURING THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS THERE WAS POTENTIAL TURMOIL IN THE U.S., BUT PUBLIC OPINION WAS AROUSED TO ACCEPT STRONG MEASURES AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION.

5. PRESIDENT PARK THEN REVIEWED THREAT TO SOUTH KOREA. SOUTH KOREA FACED IN NORTH KOREA THE MOST MILITANT, CLOSED REGIME IN THE WORLD, WHOSE THREAT TO THE SOUTH PERSISTS DESPITE 1950 CONFLICT INVOLVING LOSS OF MANY AMERICAN LIVES. THE NORTH IS SUPPORTED BY THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST CHINA, WITH THE DMZ ONLY 25 MILES FROM SEOUL AND GUNS AND ARTILLERY IN PLACE WITH RANGES EVEN SOUTH OF SEOUL, AND WITH A CONSTANT HISTORY OF THOUSANDS OF NEW PROVOCATIONS SINCE THE ARMISTICE INCLUDING THE BLUE HOUSE RAID AND ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT'S WIFE. PRESIDENT PARK THEN DESCRIBED NORTH KOREAN TUNNELS, STRESSING SERIOUS IMMEDIATE THREAT TO THE SOUTH.

6. PRESIDENT STATED THAT HE WISHED AND WOULD PREFER TO GRANT GREATER FREEDOM IN KOREA, BUT HAS CONCLUDED THAT IF HE DID SO HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DEFEND AND PROTECT HIS COUNTRY. THE COMMUNIST OBJECTIVE IS TO BUILD UP UNDERGROUND AND FOMENT SOCIAL INSTABILITY AND HE IS COMPELLED TO TAKE NECESSARY MEASURES TO BLOCK THEIR PLANS. HE URGED THAT KOREA NOT BE JUDGED BY PRESENT CONFIDENTIAL

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U.S. STANDARDS OF DEMOCRACY.

7. PRESIDENT PARK DEFENDED KOREAN CONSTITUTION AS GUARANTEEING BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS. HOWEVER, DUE TO SPECIAL THREAT FROM THE NORTH, PRESIDENT HAS EMERGENCY POWERS WHICH PRESIDENT IS CONVINCED ARE ESSENTIAL FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL STABILITY. HE POINTED OUT CONSTITUTION HAD BEEN APPROVED OVERWHELMINGLY OVER TWO YEARS AGO.

8. PRESIDENT THEN DEFENDED HIS EXERCISE OF EMERGENCY POWERS IN 1974. HE SAID HE USED THEM TO PREVENT CLAN-DESTINE ORGANIZATION OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS, ENGINEERED BY FEW FORMER COMMUNISTS WHO HAD SERVED PRISON TERMS, TO OVERTHROW REGIME BY FORCE ON APRIL 3. IF SUCCESSFUL, PLAN WOULD HAVE BEEN CONDUCTIVE TO "UNITED FRONT" EXPOUNDED BY NORTH KOREA. CLANDESTINE GROUP HAD INFILTRATED THIRTY COLLEGES AND THIRTY-FIVE HIGH SCHOOLS. PRESIDENT PARK SAID HE HAD OFFERED IMMEDIATE AMNESTY IF HARD CORE ELEMENTS TURNED THEMSELVES IN AND OVER 800 PEOPLE DID AND WERE NOT ARRESTED. ONLY 130-140 PEOPLE WERE ACTUALLY ARRESTED. THEY WERE GIVEN MILITARY TRIALS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION AND PRESIDENT VEHEMENTLY DENIED THAT THEY WERE EITHER TORTURED OR TRIED SECRETLY, STATING THAT REPORTERS, LAWYERS AND FAMILIES WERE PRESENT AT TRIALS. HE REITERATED DENIAL OF TORTURE.

9. PRESIDENT STATED THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION OF THE RIGHT TO CRITICIZE BEING GUARANTEED. THE OPPOSITION LEADER KIM YONG SAM, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS PUBLICLY LABELED THE PARK GOVERNMENT UNDEMOCRATIC AND HAS REQUESTED THE PRESIDENT'S REGISGNATION, BUT NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AGAINST HIM. HOWEVER, PARK GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO USE EMERGENCY POWERS AGAIN IF EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE A VIOLENT OVERTHROW OF HIS GOVERNMENT TAKE PLACE.

10. FINALLY, PRESIDENT STRESSED TO SENATOR NUNN THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT DETERRENT AGAINST NORTH KOREAN THREAT REMAINED THE PRESENCE OF U.S. FORCES IN THE ROK. THEY WERE CRITICAL TO THE PEACE AND SECURITY OF NOT ONLY KOREA BUT ALL OF EAST ASIA. PRESIDENT PARK URGED NO CHANGE IN CURRENT U.S. MILITARY STRENGTH IN SOUTH KOREA. CONFIDENTIAL

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11. SENATOR NUNN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR PRESIDENT PARK'S FULL EXPLANATION. HE COMMENTED THAT HE PERSONALLY ENVISAGED A CONTINUED U.S. PRESENCE IN KOREA, ALTHOUGH HE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE EXACT STRENGTH LEVELS AS THE KOREAN FORCES BECOME STRONGER, SINCE THIS IS A PUBLIC QUESTION IN THE U.S. SNEIDER

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